



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2012

a publication of the Friends of the Cache River Watershed

The Year of the Bat

The 500,000 acre Cache River Watershed with its forested hills and ancient cypress-tupelo swamps provide habitat for a number of different species. Among those that call the Cache their home, are some of the most misunderstood creatures in the world; Bats.



When it comes to bats, is it the fangs or the over exaggerated vampire movies that provoke feelings of fright? Maybe the fear of contracting rabies? The truth is; bats get an unfair reputation due to common misconceptions. Instead of fearing insect-eating bats, like the ones found here in the Cache River wetlands, we should appreciate them. Bats play a vital role in controlling insect populations, especially here in the swamp. These sophisticated hunters can eat up to half of their body weight in insects a night. That is an average of 500-1000 mosquitoes per hour!

The Year of the Bat is a two yearlong global species awareness initiative undertaken by multiple organizations in efforts to celebrate the benefits of bats and to help change the negative perceptions that surround these mysterious "creatures of the night".

In order to celebrate the year of the bat this year we are featuring a number of programs that allow a better appreciation and understanding of not only bats, but also for a plethora of other misunderstood creatures of the Cache including snakes, amphibians, spiders, and insects. This year we challenge you to think past the misconceptions, get to know and appreciate the critters you share the swamp with, and recognize the role they play in everyone's life.

Find us on Facebook:

Friends of the Cache River Watershed
Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge



The Friends of the Cache River Watershed promotes natural resource conservation throughout the watershed. It works together with landowners and members of the Joint Venture Partnership (JVP). The partnership is leading an effort to revitalize this watershed.



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2012

Movie Nights

January-May, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

First Thursday of the Month

Grab your family and friends for a relaxing evening with your fellow nature lovers. Movies about nature will provide viewers of all ages with a fun and exciting way to learn about the outside world. This year's movie series theme will be "Creepy Critters of the Cache". Each month we will focus on a different "misunderstood" critter and try to dispel the negative perceptions that surround them. Our AmeriCorps staff will hold a short discussion about the movie after each session. Don't miss this monthly opportunity to appreciate nature with the local community. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



Gray Tree Frog

Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve Open-Gate

Saturday, January 7 & February 4, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Bundle up and join us at Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve, an area typically closed to the public, to witness the majestic sight of ducks and geese arriving at sunset to roost on the icy water. Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve includes 400 acres of wetlands that are managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to provide food and shelter for waterfowl during migration. Staff will provide spotting scopes and binoculars. ***Please call ahead*** in the event of inclement weather or freezing temperatures (if the water freezes, there may not be many birds to watch!). For more information or to call ahead, contact Cypress Creek NWR at (618) 634-2231.

Location: *Bellrose Waterfowl Reserve*

Frog & Toad Call Survey

Saturday, January 28, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Four times between February and June, volunteers gear up with thermometers, clipboards, and data sheets to venture out into the evening to conduct frog and toad audible surveys in the Cache River watershed.

Volunteers who want to take part in this state wide monitoring program can join us at this orientation to learn more about the population trends of Illinois' frogs & toads. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



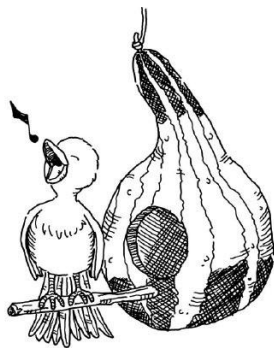
PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2012

Exploring Alaska and the Inside Passage

Saturday, February 4, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Ever thought about visiting Alaska or have you been there and want to go back? Join us for a bio-travelogue, from the perspective of biologists, which starts in Vancouver, BC, and ends in Denali National Park. Biologists Michael Jeffords and Susan Post will take you through their journey to Alaska and the Inside Passage via stunning photos and firsthand accounts. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



Home, Sweet Home!

Saturday, February 18, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Spring to an early start this season by learning how to build one type of bird nesting box, which you can install at your home! Discover the differences in nest construction for and by different bird species and how to identify species by the nest you see. Share in the excitement of birds taking up residence in your backyard! For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetland Center*

Prehistoric Peoples of Southern Illinois and how they Lived

Saturday, February 25, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Take a journey through time to learn about the continually changing lives of prehistoric humans in southern Illinois over the last 12,000 years; from the earliest known nomadic hunters pursuing Ice Age animals like the woolly mammoth to the use of bow and arrow. Their role in the Cache River Basin during this region's wide cultural development will be discussed, and you will get the chance to view artifacts from this important time in the development of the human race. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Pollinators: Not Just Honey Bees

Saturday, March 17, 10:30 a.m. to Noon

Bees, butterflies, moths & wasps are just a few of the insects that play a critical role in



pollinating farm crops, orchards, vegetable and flower gardens. Join us to learn about the “workers”, besides honey bees, that help grow our food and

bring flowers to our landscape. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Don't Forget: Movie Night February 2 (*Webs of Intrigue*), March 1 (*Eye Witness Insects*) and the Bellrose Open-Gate February 4, for details see page 2.



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2012

Tunnel Hill Bike Tours

Saturday, April 7, 9 a.m. to Noon

At one time, the rumble of freight cars reverberated through a narrow passage known as Tunnel Hill.



Today, the railroad is gone, but the wooden trestles and route provide opportunities to hike and bike on the Tunnel Hill State Trail.

Join staff for an 18-mile bicycle ride and historic tour through the most popular and scenic parts of the trail! The event is FREE and refreshments will be provided.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own bikes however, there are a limited number of bicycles that will be available for loan during the tour. Please register by March 26th by calling the Tunnel Hill State Trail office at 618-658-2168. **Location:** *Tunnel Hill State Trail Visitor Center, Vienna, IL*

Wetland Flower Garden-Go Native!

Saturday, April 21, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Explore the variety of native flowering and non-flowering plants suited for a wetland garden. Whether highlighting space for a rain garden, or figuring out how to utilize a low, wet area of your yard, there are many colorful, interesting native plants which thrive in these conditions. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.



Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Picnic for the Planet

April 2012

Celebrate Earth Day with The Nature Conservancy's *Picnic for the Planet*, a recognition of the planet we live on, the food it provides, and the people we share it with. During the month of April 2012, gather your family and friends and enjoy one of many scenic areas of the Cache. Picnic for the Planet is intended to be a global celebration. The Nature Conservancy will be mapping Picnic locations around the world and gathering photos and video from as many locations as possible. An important part of the project is the sharing of the experience across social networks; participants will have a local, personal experience at their own picnic but also see their connection to people around the planet. Stay tuned! More details about how to participate will be posted on the Friends of the Cache website (www.friendsofcache.org) as Earth Day approaches. For more information, call The Nature Conservancy office at (618) 634- 2524.

Cache River Nature Fest

Saturday, May 12, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Join us for the 11th year of Cache River Nature Fest, an event that highlights the rich diversity of habitats and wildlife in the Cache River Watershed! Guided canoe tours, bike trips, hikes, and special presentations will be scheduled throughout the day and will feature live animal demonstrations, bird and eagle watching, and a variety of exhibitors. For more information, visit www.cacherivernaturefest.org or call Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at (618)634-2231.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Don't Forget: Movie Night April 5 (*Sophisticated Serpents*) and May 3 (*Secret World of Bats*), for more details see page 2.



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2012

Tree Talk and A Spring Walk

Saturday, May 26, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Surround yourself in the diversity of trees native to southern Illinois and discover their intrinsic value to the Cache as we study basic tree identification skills. With over 127 species found in our area learn how to identify the most common ones, and their importance to our everyday lives. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Heron Pond Access Area*



Bird of Prey

Out of the Wild

June-August, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

First Thursday of the Month

Get up close and personal with critters of the Cache River wetlands. Each month, we will feature one or more animals that call the Cache River Wetlands their home. Presenters will provide opportunities to see and learn about wildlife and what they need to survive. Featured presenters are listed below. For more information, call Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at (618) 634-2231.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



Music in the Cache

Saturday, June 16, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Music is everywhere you look, or rather hear. Frogs and birds sing in the swamps and forests. Winds and rain sweep through the trees and wetlands. We will listen to nature's melodies on a hike and create our own compositions through guided activities. So tune up, it's time to shake, rattle, and ribbit! For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Winged Wonders: Dragonflies of the Cache

Saturday, July 14, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Did you know that there are more than 45 species of dragonflies in southern Illinois? That is more than half of all the dragonfly species in the state. Join naturalists, Martha and John Schwegman to learn about these winged wonders. The program includes a slide show of dragonflies found in southern Illinois, as well as fascinating facts on their life cycles, flight abilities and behaviors. Participants also will hike the Egret Slough trail behind the Wetlands Center to observe and identify dragonflies. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Don't Forget: Out of the Wild June 7 - Scott Ballard, IDNR Natural Heritage Biologist and Herpetologist and July 5 - Bev Shofstall, Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation. See Above.



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2012

Cold-blooded Creatures of the Cache

Saturday, August 25, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

How can you tell a male box turtle from a female? If you step on a cottonmouth snake will it bite? How can you tell a venomous copperhead from a harmless prairie king snake? What kind of skink has a blue tipped tail? Distinguish some of these unique characteristics and have the opportunity to experience an up close and personal interaction with reptiles native to the southernmost Illinois region! The program concludes with a hike to look for cold-blooded creatures at Heron Pond. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

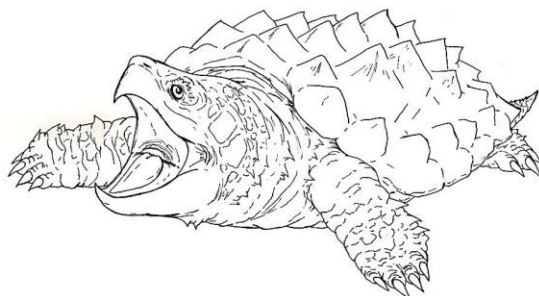
Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center & Heron Pond Trailhead*

Cache River Days-Ullin

Saturday, September 8—All Day

Don't miss the 18th Annual Cache River Days in Ullin! Food, music, exhibits, and family activities are just part of the fun. Enjoy guided canoe tours through the Cache River Wetlands; resource staff will provide an intimate look at ancient bald cypress trees while experiencing the sights and sounds of one of the largest remaining wetland resources in Illinois. Reserve your spot beginning August 8th, by calling Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at (618) 634-2231.

Location: *City Park in Ullin, Illinois*



Alligator Snapping Turtle

Fall Mushroom Hike

Sunday, September 9, 1 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Join Joe McFarland, local author of *Edible Wild Mushrooms of Illinois and Surrounding States*, for a presentation on common mushrooms found in Illinois. He will be giving a stunning photo presentation on the different types of fungus found in this area, at the Cache River Wetlands Center. After the presentation Mr. McFarland will lead a guided hike to forage for wild mushrooms. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*



Don't Forget: Out of the Wild August 2 - Brenda Garver, IDNR Little Grassy Fish Hatchery Site Interpreter, see page 5 for more details.



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2012



For the Love of Monarchs!

Saturday, September 15, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Saturdays, September, 22 & 29, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Each year the monarch butterfly makes an incredible journey from North America to Mexico but little is known about their trip and the many threats that have caused this butterfly to dwindle to the lowest population levels in decades. Help us contribute to an international effort called Project Monarch Watch which focuses on collecting data and monitoring the monarch through its 2,500 mile migration. Join staff for a presentation to learn about this butterfly, the native plants that are vital to its survival, and actions you can take to help them thrive. Following the presentation, participants will net, tag, and release monarchs. Two following Saturdays are scheduled to continue tagging butterflies in an effort to collect information that will assist with efforts to monitor their migration south to Mexico. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Cache River Wetlands Guided Hike

Monday, October 8, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Indulge in the beauty of the Cache River wetlands on a guided hike that features the rich natural and cultural history of the area. Start the day with a walk on a floating boardwalk that meanders into the Heron Pond's cathedral of cypress trees. We will then hike to Little Black Slough on the Linkage Trail and onwards to Boss Island, where a cabin dating back to 1853 still stands! The hike in its entirety will be approximately five miles. Please bring a sack lunch and water for the journey. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Heron Pond Access Area*

Wild Weekend

Saturday, October 13

In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge will provide guided canoe tours along the Old Cache Channel. This abandoned section of river is maintained by the Ohio River flood gates. The area provides habitat for a diversity of wildlife and an opportunity to fish, hunt, canoe, and watch wildlife. Reservations are required for the canoe tour; reserve your spot beginning September 13th. For more information call Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at (618) 634-2231.

Location: *Cache Levee Access*

Don't Forget to Visit our Facebook Pages: Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge and Friends of the Cache River Watershed!



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES 2012

Winter Flower ID

Saturday, November 24, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Discover the beauty of the remains of summer flowering plants. Species that were barely noticeable in the summer can be easily identified by striking seed pods or unique silhouettes this time of year. Many of them do not resemble the plant of the summer, but by checking the smell, leaves, stem and location; one can learn to identify the undressed plant. For more information, call the Cache River Wetlands Center at (618) 657-2064.

Location: *Cache River Wetlands Center*

Holiday Open House

Thursday, December 6, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Come one, come all to celebrate the holiday season! Staff from the Cache River Wetlands Joint Venture will have good food to share and festivities to go around. For more information, call Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at (618) 634-2231.



Christmas Bird Count

Monday, December 17, 6 a.m. to Sunset

Join us for a holiday tradition! The Christmas Bird Count is an all-day census of early winter bird populations. This conservation effort has been conducted throughout the entire country during mid-December for more than 100 years. The information gathered has resulted in the longest running database in ornithology. The data shows trends of bird populations across America. Interested individuals of all skill levels are welcome to participate for a day to learn more about our region's winter avian residents. For more information, call Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge at (618) 634-2231.

Contact Information

Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center
8885 State Rt. 37 South
Cypress, IL 62923
(618) 657-2064

Cache River State Natural Area
930 Sunflower Lane
Belknap, IL 62908
(618) 634-9678
<http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/PARKS/R5/region5.htm>
<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov>

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge
0137 Rustic Campus Drive
Ullin, IL 62992
(618) 634-2231
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/CypressCreek>

The Nature Conservancy
0139 Rustic Campus Drive
Ullin, IL 62992
(618) 634-2524
<http://www.nature.org>

Friends of the Cache River Watershed
0137 Rustic Campus Drive
Ullin, IL 62992

(618) 634-2231
Email: friendsofthecache@hotmail.com
<http://www.friendsofcache.org>

Facebook Page:
Friends of the Cache River Watershed
Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge